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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States foreign assistance program in the Dominican Republic (DR) is a comprehensive effort that helps the local government build and sustain a democratic, well-governed state that responds to the needs of its people, reduces widespread poverty, and conducts itself responsibly in the international arena. In FY 2009, U.S. foreign assistance was directed at consolidating development gains achieved during five decades of partnership and mutual good will with the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) and the Dominican people. U.S. foreign assistance fortifies the United States' shared goal with the GODR to improve governance and access to justice, effectively implement the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) while helping small businesses and rural communities take advantage of trade and income-generation opportunities, protect the environment, and provide a more equitable distribution of quality health and education services. To this end, United States Government (USG) programs are committed to improving GODR performance on key Millennium Challenge Corporation indicators in governance, health and education, and economic growth. Four foreign assistance goals serve as the foundation of USG program in the DR: Peace and Security, Governing Justly and Democratically, Investing in People, and Economic Growth.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

In FY 2009, U.S. foreign assistance supported Dominican military efforts to address ungoverned spaces, both land and maritime, through capacity building as well as train-and-equip initiatives such as Operation Enduring Friendship. In addition, security assistance fostered close cooperation on a range of key issues, including counterterrorism, counternarcotics, illicit weapons, and illegal immigration, by enhancing the Dominican military's alliance with United States and regional forces, and its interdiction, disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations capabilities. USG assistance programs strengthened the Dominican law enforcement, military, and judicial systems to address crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and money laundering more effectively. During FY 2009:

- The USG supported security sector reform activities in the DR by training 3,600 law enforcement officers from counternarcotics agencies within the GODR, including the Dominican Customs, in a wide variety of courses ranging from basic police training to advanced jungle commando courses offered by the Colombian Law Enforcement Academy.
- The USG supported law enforcement restructuring, reform, and operations activities. To this end, the National Police and Prosecutors received joint training with 500 cadets completing Police Academy studies and 220 government prosecutors trained in basic money laundering investigation techniques.
- Under a grant provided through the Global Office of Trafficking in Persons, the International Organization for Migration implemented an antitrafficking-in-persons project in the DR. This project supports the new GODR antitrafficking action plan. The GODR established a specialized unit to counter child sex tourism and associated trafficking in persons with USG assistance.

Governing Justly and Democratically

In FY 2009, the United States helped further to consolidate democracy in the DR by collaborating with the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary, the National Police, and the Public Defenders Office to implement the criminal procedures code, prosecute crimes more effectively, reduce corruption, and make justice services more accessible, timely, and responsive. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) worked with appropriate GODR agencies and civil society organizations to increase access to public information, strengthen oversight mechanisms, and promote a more democratic political party system. Additionally, USAID strengthened civil society organizations that monitor the transparency of public institutions and improved media coverage of governance and transparency issues. During FY 2009:

- The USAID-funded Americas Barometer survey showed improvements in Dominican citizens' perception of the justice sector, reflecting the positive effect the reforms are having. Recent reforms in the selection and training of judges and prosecutors designed to diminish political control have included greater transparency. Equally important is that the proportion of women in these positions increased to near parity among prosecutors, public defenders, and judges. Since 1998, 5 of the 16 justices of the Supreme Court have been women.
- The USAID justice program achieved tangible results. USAID technical assistance and training ensured that the GODR Public Defense Office provided assistance to 17,591 persons who could not afford legal counsel. The Judiciary's Family Mediation Center and the Public Ministry's Office for Legal Representation of Victims served nearly 12,000 people with various family and legal matters, respectively. A total of 29,186 persons received some form of legal aid from institutions like the Justice Community Centers, which are past recipients of USG institutional strengthening assistance.

Civil society organizations led an unprecedented fight against corruption as private sector organizations joined forces with civil society, youth organizations, and faith-based organizations in publicizing the USAID-sponsored perception of corruption survey. This important coalition disseminated a clear message for Dominicans to reject corruption and exercise their right to access to information.

Investing in People

In FY 2009, the United States mitigated the effects of poverty and helped build a more equitable society by improving access to quality health care and basic education, while encouraging greater grassroots support for investing in these areas. Through partnerships with the GODR, USAID programs advanced Dominican health sector reform, including the implementation of a social health insurance program. USG resources contributed to improvements in national maternal and child health and tuberculosis programs, with emphasis on prenatal, obstetric, and postnatal care; neonatal health; health systems; and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, as well as improvements in the country's immunization coverage. USG assistance promoted quality basic education through improved education policy reform and implementation. Specific activities trained teachers in math and reading at the primary level, while also creating learning opportunities for out-of-school children and at-risk youth. USAID initiated a program to improve the deplorable living conditions of Haitian immigrant families and poor Dominicans residing in *batey* (sugarcane worker) communities. During FY 2009:

- The prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) testing for pregnant women improved, with a 43.7 percent increase from the previous year's result of 12,211. USG partners collaborated on HIV and family planning training to foster the integration of women's health services to include family planning, cancer and T-Helper cells screening, PMTCT care, and the provision of anti-retroviral therapy. Despite the lack of test kits, lab reagents, and medical drugs, there has been an improvement in the number of people actively enrolled in anti-retroviral therapy programs with a 60.6 percent increase from last year's result.
- The USAID Kangaroo Mother Care and Family-Centered Maternity pilot project contributed to improvements in neonatal health and the promise of reductions in fatal infections in premature babies who are being discharged early from the hospital. This project stresses the importance of the role of the father in caring for premature babies. The GODR expressed interest in expanding the neonatal intervention to additional hospitals.
- Health delivery services for *batey* residents improved through expanded vaccination campaigns and increased Pap smear awareness and testing. A total of 126 children less than 7 years of age received vaccination with 380 additional older children and adults. A total of 192 women received Pap smear tests, 90 percent of whom were being tested for the first time. Ministry of Health community health promoters equipped with medicine kits carried out health education outreach in the *bateyes* covering reproductive and mother-child health themes among a variety of public health topics, including diagnosis of common illnesses.
- In the 2008-09 school year, education results demonstrated that USAID contributed to improved student performance. In the math and reading program, students' scores in fourth grade math and language arts increased by 6.1 and 6.5 percent, respectively. There were no gender differences in student performance in math, but girls performed better in reading than boys. USAID trained 482 school officials, 593 school principals, 4,104 teachers, and 26 Parent Teacher Associations and, as a result, benefitted 99,901 students in primary schools. A total of 110,668 textbooks and materials were distributed during the year.

- USAID and the Ministry of Education initiated a 5-year Effective Schools Program that builds on successful teacher training programs in math, language arts, and school management and extends coverage from 200 to 400 schools. Secretary Clinton announced the \$16 million Effective School Program during a visit to the DR, when she reaffirmed USG commitment to the education sector. The Effective School Program includes a new safe school component to reduce gender-based violence.
- DR private sector contributions in support of the USAID quality basic education program reached \$222,642 in 2009. These investments assisted 15 schools through specific plans that were designed to meet the needs of each school, and benefited 11,925 students and 331 teachers. Some 3,833 at-risk and out-of-school youth benefited from USAID programs. Approximately 2,700 received remedial math and reading courses, 900 received pre/formal vocational training, 3,500 participated in summer camps, and 200 children have been re-integrated back into the formal school system.
- USAID signed a unique alliance designed to channel the enormous popularity of baseball in the DR into concrete development initiatives in many of the country's most underserved communities in November 2009. To date, USAID has combined forces with Pedro Martinez (four-time Cy Young Award winner), the Major League Baseball Players Association Foundation-Players Trust, the New York Mets, the Seattle Mariners, the San Diego Padres, and the Chicago Cubs in funding a series of community-based activities focused on basic education, public health, youth development, and economic growth. The "There is Power in Learning" project, co-funded by Pedro Martinez and signed in June 2009, provided educational reinforcement, life skills, reproductive health training, and micro-credit lending to more than 390 underprivileged families.

Economic Growth

In FY 2009, U.S. assistance complemented efforts by the GODR and other donors to streamline the regulatory environment and implement CAFTA-DR to generate broad-based, sustainable economic growth. USG programs addressed disincentives that inhibit private sector investment, innovation, and development. The USG also promoted improvements in the competitiveness of small businesses, particularly those negatively affected by CAFTA-DR. USG technical assistance and training helped potential Dominican exporters to diversify crops, increase rural value chain productivity, identify new markets, and develop marketing strategies that take advantage of increased possibilities for local and international trade. Activities advanced the enforcement of Dominican environmental laws and regulations at the local level by helping municipal environmental units develop and enforce local ordinances. In addition, U.S. assistance promoted efforts to protect and conserve biodiversity through improved management of Dominican protected areas, watersheds, and coastal resources. During FY 2009:

- USAID provided technical assistance to the GODR and the private sector to strengthen the Dominican institutions responsible for implementing CAFTA-DR, improve compliance with the treaty's commitments, and promote effective public-private dialogue on its implementation. USAID technical assistance improved CAFTA-DR administrative procedures and operations in 11 state secretariats, two general directorates, the Central Bank and the Superintendency of Securities, including the Directorate of Foreign Commerce, the main state institution responsible for administering and overseeing the country's international trade agreements.

- USAID provided technical assistance to the Dominican agricultural sector to help small-scale rural entrepreneurs, especially those producing and marketing agricultural and wood products, make a successful transition to a free market economy and participate successfully in the opportunities that CAFTA-DR offers. Through its Rural Economic Diversification Program, USAID provided technical assistance, credit, and grants to 41 cluster groups of Dominican small farm producers and processors to diversify and improve the quality and competitiveness of their products for the local and global markets.
- USAID achieved significant results in the institutional strengthening of nine tourism clusters and developing the Dominican Consortium for Tourism Competitiveness; developing local tourism products and services that may not otherwise have access to the tourist market; and raising awareness on biodiversity conservation, protected areas, and natural resources management as important assets to foster innovative models of sustainable tourism.
- USAID supported the creation of local tourism attractions and products, such as the Living Museums in the Sea project with Indiana University featuring the recently discovered remains of the 1699 Cara Merchant vessel belonging to the renowned British pirate, Captain Kidd. In addition to the Captain Kidd site, the network of underwater archaeological preserves includes three additional sites with cultural and biological characteristics, the 1724 Guadalupe Preserve, the Guaraguao Reef 18th Century Cannons, and the St. George Artificial Reef. The four sites together present a variety of cultural resources and reef environments, and provide a unique opportunity to promote sustainable tourism while promoting environmental protection of coral reefs and biodiversity.